

COLUMBIA RIVER FISHERMEN'S PROTECTIVE UNION

SUMMER 1991



THE UNKNOWN FISHERMAN

A rare, old photograph captures the timeless, placid image of a drifting Columbia River Gillnetter, hauling in his net the old-fashioned way - with no power roller and just a five-horsepower motor. The year is not known, but the old wooden boat is sure to be one of the very first powered gillnetters on the river.

Another anti-gillnet initiative is in the works... see page 4

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COLUMBIA RIVER FISHERMEN'S PROTECTIVE UNION

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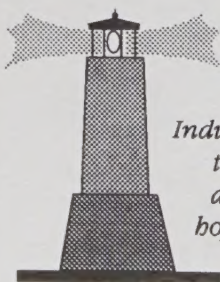
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FOREWORD

The Columbia River Gillnetter is the pilot of the Lower Columbia River Commercial Fishing Industry, keeping fishermen and the public in touch with today's important issues. The advertisements which appear make it possible to publish this paper, and we hope you will, in return, patronize and thank the people who support our livelihood.



FROM THE
SECRETARY

I can't remember a time when there has been more media coverage on fish issues, both on television and in the newspaper. Maybe this time, with so many interest groups working together on the problem of small fish runs, something good will come out of it.

If there's one thing we know for sure, it's that simply cutting back the harvest is not the answer. These fish need help, right from the start. They need help to make it to the ocean, and, once there, they need to be protected. They also need help to return to their spawning grounds.

It also seems pretty clear that the problems start when the fish begin their trek downstream as smolts. The first thing these smolts need is a higher river flow, which will create murky water, which will give them a better chance of maneuvering the dams and avoiding predators like squawfish and walleye.

The large population of sea lions on the Columbia also plays a part.

Once the fish become adults in the ocean, there is an important need for some kind of protection from Asian high-seas driftnetters who snare thousands of salmon each year.

Most of the problems have been here for many years, but only now are they being brought to the public's attention.

Now, after years of both commercial and sport fishermen being asked to cut down on their harvest, with nothing being done to improve water flows, a conservation group has filed petitions under the Endangered Species Act, when this is clearly not the answer either.

Sure, it would be nice to have strong wild runs, but man and his progress have driven them away.

It's fortunate we have hatchery fish, otherwise there would be no fishing at all on the Columbia, which would mean disastrous consequences for the Northwest.

The wording of the Mitchell Act, enacted in Congress in 1936, has not been followed, and I just hope we haven't waited too long.

—Jack Marincovich

Anti-gillnet initiative could be on '92 ballot

Commercial fishermen everywhere need to be aware of a strong anti-gillnet initiative which could be on Oregon's 1992 ballot.

Just 63,000 signatures of registered voters by July 6, 1992 are all that's needed to put the "Fish and Marine Life Conservation Act" before Oregon voters, and that's not good news for gillnetters.

Similar to California's Proposition 132, which banned all gillnetting within three miles of the southern California coastline in last year's election, this initiative would stop virtually all gillnetting in Oregon, and give complete and utmost priority to recreational fishing.

The bill would also put the state in the fish business, creating and regulating a series of fish traps at Willamette Falls to gather the harvest.

While most industry leaders say the chances of this measure making it to the ballot are not good, commercial fishermen are — and rightfully should be — both worried and prepared for the worst.

Just look what's happening with the Spotted Owl.

"I just hope we don't sit on our hands like the California guys did," said one gillnetter.

Yes, California's commercial fishermen were definitely caught with their pants down while anti-gillnet supporters were hard at work getting the needed pre-ballot signatures — then the votes.

How did they do it? By showing people explicit pictures of the Asian high-seas driftnetters reeling in ton after ton of various sealife, then saying, if you sign *this* and vote *this way*, you'll stop this slaughtering.

Sounds fair, doesn't it?

Many unaware California fishermen and their interests thought so, too, and some undoubtedly voted for the bill without even knowing what it really meant.

Of course, none of us agree with the Japanese, Taiwanese and South Korean fishermen who sweep the seas with their giant, miles-long monofilament nets. But what's that got to do with local American gillnetters? Do people *really* think we do the same kind of damage?

Firstly, monofilament nets, which catch more fish, have not been allowed on the Columbia River for years, and second, we don't even put our nets in the water if there's even the *slightest* chance the escapement quota won't be met. The Asian fishermen are, despite recent agreements, essentially unregulated.

We've won the battle here in Oregon so far — Senate bill 611, another sports-priority measure, surfaced just this spring — but didn't reach the floor for a vote. Thankfully, our lawmakers saw the bill for what it really was, about ten miles off the mark and a complete waste of time for everyone.

But will Oregon voters be as smart?

Many CRFPU members serve on various agencies and advisory boards. Members are encouraged to contact individuals regarding specific issues, or call the Union office.

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Biologists working to save salmon

Nearly 400,000 hatchery-raised, 18-month-old spring chinook salmon smolts were released into the waters of the Imnaha River this spring, marking the beginning of their long journey to the sea.

The Imnaha River flows into the Snake at the northeast corner of Oregon, so the release is seen as a principal hope for troubled Snake River fish runs.

"We want to produce hatchery fish that can return and reproduce like the wild runs, so we can supplement, not replace, wild salmon production," said Richard Carmichael, fish biologist for the Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife at Eastern Oregon State College.

An integral part of the Lower Snake River Compensation Plan implemented by the ODF&W in the early 1980s, the project is designed to augment spring chinook and summer steelhead runs on the Imnaha and Grande Ronde rivers.

After a 17-month rearing period where the smolts are fed, medicated and monitored, they are trucked to the site where their parents spawned (near the Imnaha weir) to be placed in "acclimation ponds" to increase their chances of survival in the wild.

But, despite constant care and attention, less than one percent of the released fish will make it to the Pacific.

Willamette spring chinook run is on schedule

The Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife says the 1991 spring chinook salmon run on the Willamette River is both on schedule and on target.

Steve King, harvest manager for the department, says the final falls-count prediction of about 60,000 salmon appears to be correct, with just over 44,000 spring chinook being counted at Willamette Falls as of Wednesday, June 12.

When you add the 34,000 fish caught by anglers on the river, (their best catch ever); the 12,000 caught by gillnetters and another 6000 which entered the Clackamas River, that brings the total Willamette run to about 112,000 — better than the 110,000 prediction.

TOPSIDE IN DISTRICT 5

Last winter's smelt gillnet season was just starting to get good, with good runs of smelt entering the Cowlitz, when almost immediately, the price dropped.

The winter season for chinook was pretty good on the Oregon side of the river, and prices were excellent. The Washington side of the river didn't fair as well.

Red Slough and Gut drifts have built

a light and radar reflector for the island off Big Slough. It will show on radar and can be seen at night if there isn't fog.

Ray Pedersen is drying his 28' smelt boat for the summer, with plans on fiberglassing the wood hull.

Hope everyone does good in Alaska, we need it to make up for the poor fishing on the river.

—Mark Laukkanen

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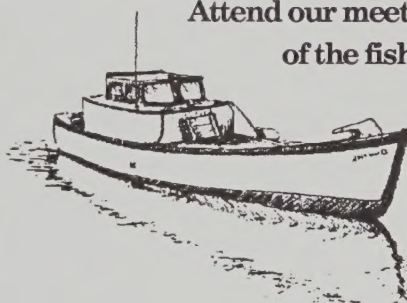
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OBSERVERS: GILLNETTERS DON'T BELONG IN CATEGORY 1

Preliminary reports on the frequency of interactions between Lower Columbia River Gillnetters and marine mammals by a federal observer program suggest that the fishery does not belong in the current Category I classification.

A total of 1136 observation data forms and 873 interviews were completed by thirty observers placed aboard gillnetters during the 1991 winter chinook season.

Joe Scordino, deputy chief of the fisheries division for the Northwest region of the National Marine Fisheries Service, said that the early data results from the

winter season appear to be good news for local commercial fishermen, who were initially leery of participating in the observer program.

"We really didn't have a choice in the matter," said one Astoria fisherman. "If we didn't cooperate, though, we'd be dead in the water."

A similar study in the early 1980s put Lower Columbia Gillnetters in Category I (frequent taking of and interaction with marine mammals) in the first place, so they were rightfully worried the results of this project could be used against them again.

Fishermen have long been saying that interactions with seals and sea lions are not that frequent on the lower river, and saw the observer program as their only chance of reclassification.

From the 271 gillnet boats fishing on the lower river, observers documented more than 800 drifts, including some 318 day drifts aboard 244 vessels, and 318 night drifts on board 128 boats. Just 27 dead mammals were collected by the observers during the 13-day season, including nine harbor seals and one California sea lion.

The Northern, or Steller sea lion, unquestionably the most threatened mammal species, was involved in much less than one percent of the interactions with fishermen. Although gillnetters can get federal exemptions so they can shoot California sea lions and harbor seals to defend

their valuable catches, Steller sea lions cannot be harmed.

Of the 13,200 salmon caught by gillnetters, observers saw 766 landed, of which some 736 came in undamaged by marine mammals. A total of thirty fish were scarred, while seven were considered unsalable.

Fishermen also question the definition of "interaction," which is defined as any mammal within ten meters of a gillnet. "I've had seals and sea lions chasing smelt that close, and that could artificially inflate the numbers," said Kent Martin, a gillnetter from Skamokawa, Wash. That would make gillnets look like they have a much greater impact than is really the case.

And, Scordino agrees: "What they've defined as interaction should be as animals in the vicinity, rather than interaction," he said.

Representatives from the NMFS, the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Washington Department of Wildlife participated in the winter observer program.

At a meeting held this spring, Jim Brennan, project leader and Russell Porter, assistant director of the PSMFC, thanked the fishermen for their gracious participation and cooperation.

The observers "had nothing but good to say about the help you gave us," Porter said.



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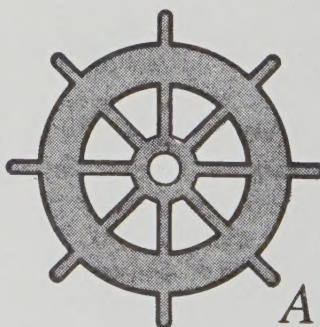
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BRIEFLY

James River fined for alkaline discharge

The James River Corporation has been fined \$10,000 when an undetermined amount of alkaline waste spilled into a creek near its Camas pulp mill this spring.

According to the state Department of Ecology, allowed alkalinity limits were exceeded for nearly 30 minutes on February 27 when an employee inadvertently washed lime mud from a dump truck.

The ecological damage from the spill, which the company says is minimal, is not yet known.

Indian fishermen tackle Exxon

YAKIMA, Wash. — Indian fishermen have filed suit against Exxon for the devastating Prince William Sound oil spill which they say has all but ruined their fishing grounds on the Columbia River.

The lawsuit, filed this spring in King County Superior Court in Seattle, contends that the nearly 11 million gallons of North Slope crude oil spilled into pristine Alaskan waters killed millions of fish, and severely reduced the harvest.

Meanwhile, the state of Alaska is continuing to seek civil damages from the Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. for its part in the March 1989 spill, claiming Exxon's upcoming deal with the government doesn't go far enough.

A federal judge apparently agreed, and decided in April that the \$100 million tariff Exxon had initially agreed to pay won't be enough to cover the heavy damage to the environment.

We're sorry...

The name of Christine Takalo, Sally the Salmon Princess in 1966, was incorrectly spelled in the last issue of the *Gillnetter*. The correct spelling is Takalo. We apologize for the error.

Summit recovery plan falls short

Long-term solutions have unfortunately eluded the thirty-member group

Although it failed to prevent an endangered species listing for the threatened native salmon, the Northwest Salmon Summit, a 30-member group created by Oregon Senator Mark Hatfield last October, did manage to reach an agreement on diverting water flows on the Snake River.

Some 900,000 acre feet of water — enough to supply the needs of more than 2 million people for one year — will be used to aid fish flows, mostly between mid-April and mid-July of this year, when young spring and summer chinook salmon are making their way to the mighty Pacific.

An unspecified amount of water could be used later to help fall chinook, which migrate in the summer months.

The Summit participants also want to experiment with increased water flow velocity by drawing down the huge reservoirs behind the four federal dams on the Snake River and possibly John Day Dam on the Columbia to minimum operating levels. That would mean drawing down the river about three feet, when navigational locks are closed for maintenance.

Physical and legal constraints prevent full testing of this procedure this year, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, but Summit members requested that Corps lower water levels at the four reservoirs to near minimum operating levels through July 15.

Massive turbines in place at several hydroelectric dams along the Columbia River system have made the salmon's journey a pretty rough road to travel, and young salmon have traditionally not fared well when negotiating the dams. It is hoped that the additional push of water at this critical

time will guide more fish through unscathed.

"The benefits to fish are substantial," said Jack Robertson, deputy administrator for the Bonneville Power Administration, although the effects on electric rates are as yet unknown.

But some experts say the plan fails to meet the needs of returning fish, who need the water just as much to reach their spawning grounds in the fall.

Commercial fishermen are still not sure what effect the endangered species designation will have on fishing seasons, but some fear that even more harvest restrictions could be forthcoming.

Idaho's recreational boaters are probably the hardest hit by the Summit decision so far, and they could have serious trouble navigating the reservoirs on the Snake and the Clearwater rivers this summer.

Environmental groups are not particularly pleased with the group's work, either, and consider themselves among the losers.

The Summit plan calls for a 5-foot reduction in reservoir levels during the same 2-month migration period, which will barely meet the minimum water level required for navigation lock operation.

"Idaho is going to try to put more water in the river this year," said an assistant to Idaho Gov. Cecil Andrus. "But it will be inadequate. Idaho water cannot solve a problem created by Army Corps dams." Andrus had initially been pushing for a 17-foot drawdown, which would have seriously curtailed agricultural irrigators and barge companies.

Story continues on page 28

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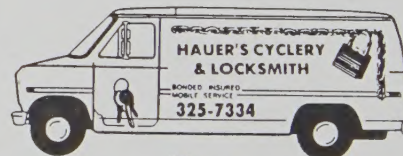
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Oregonian columnist speaks out against anti-gillnet attack

Not all Northwest sports fishermen are putting the blame on commercial fisheries for the troubles facing our native salmon.

Bill Monroe, an outdoor columnist for *The Oregonian*, penned a strong letter this spring which spoke out against this misdirected, misguided attack on gillnetters by anglers.

He writes: "And, please, only Walt Disney, in all his misdirected, showmanship-not-biology wisdom would portray a salmon choking to death in a gillnet, yet achieving some sort of ethereal majesty while fighting violently to prolong its life at the end of a fishing rod."

Monroe, an avid sportsman, does not support recent legislation which would effectively forbid all Lower Columbia River gillnetting and place fish traps at Willamette Falls near Oregon City, controlled and managed by the state of Oregon.

He says that the idea of fish traps is not only repulsive to commercial fishermen, it would also mean that fewer fish would make their way to valley and southern Oregon anglers — at a time when that fishery "is one of the few growing economic strengths of Oregon's angling scene."



This is the Sue H. Elmore, a pickup boat for the Columbia River Packers Association's famous Elmore cannery in Astoria. She picked up many a salmon from several points, including Nehalem, Tillamook and Siletz.

Monroe says that there is a future for gillnetting in the Northwest. "The arguments favoring continuation of a commercial gillnet fishery in the Columbia remain strong, particularly in a state that has worked hard on the national and international fronts to achieve a balance of harvests of fish that know no boundaries," he says.

He also hits hard on an argument sportsfishermen have tried to use against gillnetters for years: steelhead. "The fact

is that winter gillnets take only a relative handful of steelhead in their late February seasons — an average of 50 fish per day are handled, 10 of them dead. In seasons that last from one to 17 days, that isn't very many.

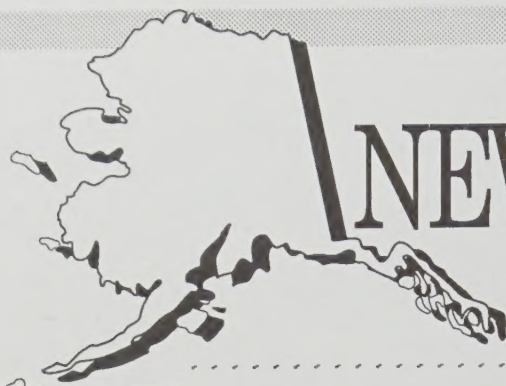
"Portland anglers need to set aside their greed, their emotions and their well-meaning intentions and instead invest their energy with the rest of the state in attempting to solve the real problems facing our fisheries," Monroe concludes.

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NEWS from the NORTH

Frozen sockeye is top U.S. seafood export in 1990

Alaska's prized frozen sockeye salmon was the number one U.S. seafood export in 1990, according to a report in Fishery Market News magazine.

More than 139.2 million pounds of the top-quality product - worth some \$327.7 million - was sent through the Anchorage customs office last year, and, not surprisingly, all of it was headed for market in Japan. Another 45 million pounds of sockeye, worth nearly \$125 million, went through the Seattle customs office, also bound for the land of the rising sun.

On the list of the top exports were frozen Alaskan king crab, frozen cod, frozen herring, abalone, frozen sablefish, frozen shrimp, frozen sea urchins and other non-specific fish products - all destined for Japan.

While the frozen seafood market is up, the canned salmon market is down nearly five percent from last year, despite a hefty 57 percent increase in canned Bristol Bay red salmon. More than four million cases (basis 48 tall) of canned salmon, including king, red, coho, pink and chum, were packed by processors in 1990, as compared to some 4.2 cases in 1989.

About 1.1 million cases of red salmon were produced last year, up from 724,697 in 1989 and nearly five times the amount (237,182 cases) packed in 1988.

Speaking of Bristol Bay reds, the majority of bay fishermen, at this writing, have still received just \$1 per pound for their 1990 catches - a twenty percent drop from 1989 - and a whopping 53 percent drop from 1988.

And, word has it fishermen might face another twenty percent cut this year.

Yukon fishermen form association

ST. MARY'S — Fishermen from throughout the Yukon River watershed met here this spring for a second round of discussions aimed at rebuilding salmon stocks on the Yukon River.

Spurred by drastically reduced returns of salmon to the nearly 1,900-mile Yukon River, fishermen have joined together to form the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association, representing 45,000 Yupik, Athabascan and Caucasian subsistence and commercial fishermen.

Forty delegates to the association were elected by fishermen from villages throughout the Yukon River.

The Association's goals are:

1. To support cooperative management funding from the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game;
2. To curtail interceptions of chum salmon in False Pass;
3. To support establishment of 200-foot median strips between logging areas and salmon spawning grounds and
4. To request an Alaska Sea Grant Marine Advisory agent for the Yukon River.

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WAVES FROM THE PAST

This is an old Bristol Bay sailing gillnetter, shown here sometime in the 1930s with her butterfly sail at full mast. The "Diamond J" markings designate an Alaska Packers cannery fisherman, back in the days when there were no reels or level-winds. Several of these 32-foot wooden gillnetters can still be seen today, slowly decaying on a beach along the Naknek River, their quest for salmon long since finished. Some even have their sail mast still attached, pointing aimlessly toward the sky.

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Ground breaks on Umatilla River project

The first phase of a project which will help bring healthy fish runs back to the Umatilla River Basin broke ground May 1 at the McNary Dam.

The \$45 million pumping project will provide extra water for fish, while assuring that local irrigators will have water for their crops. The Bureau of Reclamation will pump water from the Columbia River for use by irrigators, who will in turn, leave an equal amount in the river for fish.

The Bonneville Power Administration will provide the power for the pumping — some \$500,000 worth per year until the project is completed in the late 1990s.

Reclamation is constructing a \$7 million state-of-the-art aqueduct system which stretches from McNary Dam to a Umatilla Basin pumping station, where the water will be diverted into an existing canal.

Thus, the area's irrigation districts won't need to use Umatilla River water, leaving more water for fish.

The BPA is also spending \$30 million on fish ladders, canal screens and habitat enhancement at other locations, which could guide some 8 million young salmon and steelhead — and up to 40,000 returning adults — through the deadly dam system.

Fishermen work to change image

Seeking to improve the uncaring, indiscriminate image of the commercial fisherman, seven Alaskan and seven West Coast fishing organizations have banded together to form the North Pacific Gillnet Alliance.

The group, which held its first meeting in Seattle this spring, hopes to improve communications between the fourteen organizations, which will in turn bond and strengthen the commercial fishing industry in general.

At the top of the group's agenda are important issues such as marine mammal management, licensing, Coast Guard

safety regulations, public opinion and the environment.

Alaskan members of the alliance are the Bristol Bay Driftnetters Association, the Alaska Independent Fishermen's Marketing Association, the Bering Sea Fishermen's Association, Concerned Area 'M' Fishermen, the Cordova District Fishermen United, the United Cook Inlet Drift Association and the United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters.

Oregon and Washington members include the Columbia River Fishermen's Protective Union, Salmon for All, Grays

Continued on page 38



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Idaho sockeye guided around dams

IDAHO FALLS, Idaho — A joint venture between state fisheries experts, Shoshone-Bannock Indian Tribes and the Bonneville Power Administration has given new life and hope in an emergency plan to save Idaho's vanishing sockeye salmon.

Young salmon are trapped at central Idaho's Redfish Lake near Stanley, then transported by truck to a state research center at Eagle. Eventually, the salmon will be raised to spawning age, with their offspring released in Stanley Basin lakes which feed into the headwaters of the Salmon River.

The program allows the fish to bypass the deadly network of giant hydroelectric dams on the Columbia River Basin which take big bites out of native fish stocks. With the release of some 10,000 smolts within the next two years, fisheries officials hope to give the sockeye at least a chance of survival.

"It's a very short time frame we're operating on," says Rick Itami, district manager for the BPA at Idaho Falls.

None of the fish was observed returning last year to spawn at Redfish Lake, which contains Idaho's only Snake River sockeye population.

Let's talk about Snag Pulling

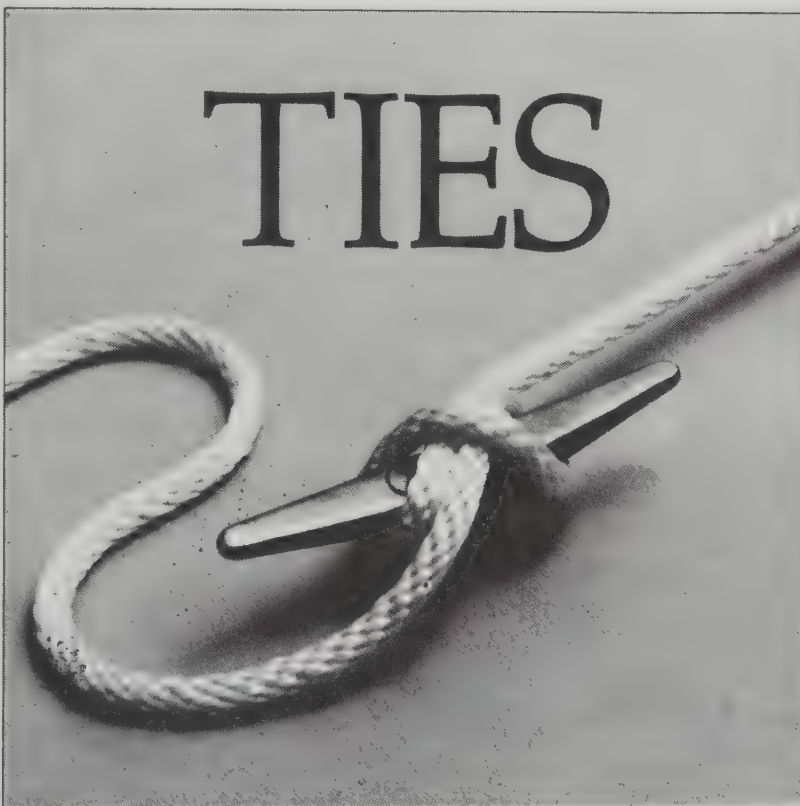
Many Columbia River fishermen are enjoying fishing in waters free of snags. The waters are clear because a few fishermen, usually the same, have taken the time to remove the snags to reduce gear damage.

We hire divers, make new snag nets, and apply to the state for snag permits. We also have set up a Lower River Snag fund at the Astoria First Interstate Bank, under the signatures of Phil Johnson and Don Riswick. We ask fishermen from Tongue Point to the bar to pay \$50 per year in dues, tax deductible.

It is unfair for a few fishermen to shoulder the responsibility of keeping the lower river clear of snags, and our program cannot continue without your help. Many fishermen have never been out snagging, so here's a chance to contribute.

On page 36 is a special clipout to send in your dues. Don't put it off any longer — join the "snag club" today.

ATTENTION YOUNGS RIVER FISHERMEN: A snag fund has also been started for your fishery. Fish buyers have receipt books to take the \$20 yearly dues.



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BLUEBACK REPORT

Beginning in the early 1900s and through the 1970s, the construction of several main-stem dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers and their tributaries greatly reduced the accessible spawning and rearing areas available for "blueback" sockeye.

Originally, sockeye nursery lakes in the Columbia Basin contained a minimum of 222,850 surface acres. Remaining definable runs are to Lakes Wenatchee and Osoyoos, only about 4 percent, or 8,174 acres of the original lake habitat.

Sockeye movement into the lakes of the upper Salmon River was significantly inhibited by Sunbeam Dam between 1913-34. Since passage was restored, only a remnant run as large as 4,300 blueback has persisted.

A sockeye run in Wallowa Lake, Oregon, in the Grande Ronde subbasin of the Snake River, was eliminated early in this century by an irrigation channel diversion, and a control structure built in the lake outlet to raise and stabilize the level of the lake. Presently, a self-sustained kokanee population persists in the lake and its tributaries.

In 1989, 45,300 blueback were counted as escapement at the Priest Rapids Dam on the Upper Columbia, while just four returned to the Ice Harbor Dam on the Snake. In 1990, just one sockeye was counted at Ice Harbor, while 46,300 made it to Priest Rapids.

The data suggests that the return to the Columbia River in 1991 will be 60-80,000 blueback, an improvement over the runs of 1989 and 1990 which totalled 41,900 and 49,600 respectively. The majority of the run will be Wenatchee stock.

The Department may conduct a single-vessel Zone 2 test fishery program in mid-June to determine if a non-treaty opening will occur in zones 1-5 this year.

The last non-treaty blueback season was in 1988, when zones 1-5 caught 17,500 sockeye from a total catch of 30,900. In 1987, non-treaty fishermen in the same zones caught 28,300 sockeye from a strong total run of 145,300.

Department guidelines for dividing the shared harvest are 75 percent for treaty fishermen, 25 percent for non-treaty fishermen, when the run is between 75-100,000.

Tule salmon returned to creek

WESTPORT, OR — In another example of valiant human efforts to replenish the low returns of Columbia River salmon, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife released some 50,000 tule smolts into Plympton Creek in east Clatsop County in early May.

Now on their way to the Pacific, the smolts are the end product of the ODF&W's program to rebuild the tule run. The department placed a weir in the creek last fall to trap returning fish, so eggs for brooding stock could be gathered for spawning at the Big Creek hatchery a few miles away.

Hatchery workers and other local vol-


unteers collected some 559 female tules in late August and September of last year, which were transported by truck to Big Creek hatchery to perform the annual spawning ritual.

Department biologists say that about 1,100 tules made their way back to Plympton Creek this year, about what was expected.

ODF&W estimates that about 65,000 tules returned to the Columbia River system in 1990, one of the lowest amounts on record since counting began in 1964. Typically, tule runs average about 150,000. More than 300,000 came back in 1987.

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Sportsmen rekindle old flame against Gillnetters

Northwest sportfishermen are trying to quickly take advantage of the recent public attention on our troubled salmon, and think it's a great time to rekindle their age-old flame against the Columbia River Gillnetter.

The *Forum*, a publication of the Salmonid Foundation of Woodland, Wash., proudly displayed a letter written in 1987 by longtime anti-gillnet advocate Forrest L. Meuret, now deceased, on its front page recently. The newspaper, which was not dated, made no secret of its purpose and credo: get gillnets off the Lower Columbia River.

The letter hit hard: "Do not expect sportsmen to accept anything less than immediate halting of gillnetting on spring chinook and sturgeon below Bonneville Dam.

"There is no question that an absolute priority for the sport fishery over the non-Indian commercial fishing is coming."

Mr. Chuck Voss, editor of the *Forum*, also touts: "Perhaps now, with many of our up-river stocks in such tragic condition is the time to carry on the fight to bring back the Columbia River fishery by first doing away with an outmoded, extremely non-selective hatchery machine, the Columbia River gillnetter," he said.

Remarks such as these are even more unacceptable and off the mark in 1991 than they were in 1987. These folks should know by now that priority cannot be given to one user group over another, and, quite literally, we're both in the same boat.

Instead of stirring up more trouble with their widely-touted anti-gillnet propaganda, sportsfishermen should be worried about their own fishery. If gillnetters are forced off the river, anglers will be right behind them.

No matter how much they want to ruin the livelihoods of thousands of peo-

ple in the Northwest, it's just not going to happen. We can't just sit back and let them get a foothold.

But they're trying — and trying hard. Just 63,000 signatures are needed to get the "Fish and Marine Life Conservation Act" on Oregon's 1992 ballot, a proposal which would strive to optimize recreational fishing.

The initiative, similar to California's Proposition 132 which stopped all gillnetting in state waters in the last election, has many fishermen worried. "The anti-gillnet mania is like a plague spreading up the West Coast," said one Columbia River Gillnetter.

The cold, hard fact of the matter is that foreign high-seas driftnetters — the Japanese, the Taiwanese and the Koreans — are giving American gillnetters a bad name. There is also no question that sportsfishermen and environmentalists are putting these ruthless, indiscriminate, unregulated Asian fishermen in the same boat as local fishermen — and that's just not fair.

It's also a downright lie and a complete distortion of what's really happening. Comparing the 30-mile-long high-seas driftnets with tiny American gillnets is senseless, but that's just what the proponents of the California proposition did — and they'll surely try to use the same tactics here.

Let us not be fooled by such reprehensible political trickery.

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TO THE EDITOR

Just enjoyed my first copy of the Columbia River Gillnetter.

Our interest, of course, is the preservation of the anadromous fisheries in the upper Sacramento River. I have been involved with the upper river habitat and hatcheries for the past ten years. I am on the board of directors of the Tehama Fly Fishers, and the group was the original petitioner of the California Fish and Game Commission to list the Winter Run Chinook salmon as endangered.

This brings me to your article about listing some salmon under E.S.A. in the Columbia River system. Our efforts to list were thwarted for years while a so-called enhancement plan was put into effect. The Winter Run numbers had degraded in 20 years from 117,000 to 470.

From your own experience I'm sure you and the fisheries biologists know what is wrong with the Columbia River stocks, and a ten-year stall may just be time enough to lose most of what's left of this valuable resource.

Remember, Hatfield and Packwood are hammered by agriculture, electric

power (BPA), developers, and miners (gravel extractors) to continue business as usual. Specifically, if "firm fishload carrying capacity" is sought on a permanent basis, you will find great resistance from agriculture and developers, as we have found on the Sacramento River. Here, B.O.R. has said it will sue the state over its requirements for fish flows.

If you feel you must go along with Packwood and Hatfield, I would suggest that you insist items like contaminated waters, (temperature, turbidity, dissolved oxygen), seal predation and spawning gravel extraction are included in any enhancement program they come up with.

Don, I feel that our fishing industry resource is in a critical stage. As in California, the state as well as the Federal Service know the status and condition that exists and if they do not take some listing action now they will be faced with the apparent incompetence to cope with the public trust with which they are charged and are paid to accomplish.

I have seen outstanding efforts made by fisheries biologists and commercial

fishermen in proposals to Congress and state governments to address the true problems, only to find the political pressures of other water users dilute an effective approach for the extremely valuable fishing industry.

Finally, Don, I agree that processing ships threaten small-boat fishermen. Further the poorly-controlled harvest will surely destroy a viable ecosystem. Terry Thompson is right when he says his long-term welfare is at stake.

I look sometimes with a jaundiced eye on the actions of the National Marine Fisheries Service, but I hope the alternative to listing does not turn out to be a drawn-out demise of one of our nation's great food industries.

The question of are the salmon really threatened? The historical record is very clear to me, within the past 50 to 75 years. If the trend continues to degrade, the end is in sight, and the agencies will have to list to save their own you know what.

—Chuck DeJournette
Upper Sacramento River Salmon
& Steelhead Advisory Committee
11705 Parey Ave. #27
Red Bluff, CA 96080

Winter chinook season good for some, not for others



The 1991 winter gillnet season on the Lower Columbia could probably be best described as spotty.

Fishermen landed some 13,200 winter chinook salmon during the 13-day season which began Monday, February 10, according to the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife. Of these, over 90 percent, nearly 12,000, were Willamette River fish.

The winter gillnet season, which traditionally extends well into the first week of March, did not do so this year. ODF&W stopped fishing on the evening of Friday, March 1, just as fishermen were enjoying their third best day of the season. Options to allow up to ten additional days were not exercised by the Compact.

Although it wasn't an altogether poor showing, the season did not live up to expectations. As is often true in an average year, some fishing areas were markedly better than others. One drift did very well,

while another, just a few fathoms away, was not nearly as lucky.

Gillnetters received about \$3.50/lb. for chinook and some \$2.00/lb. for sturgeon this year.

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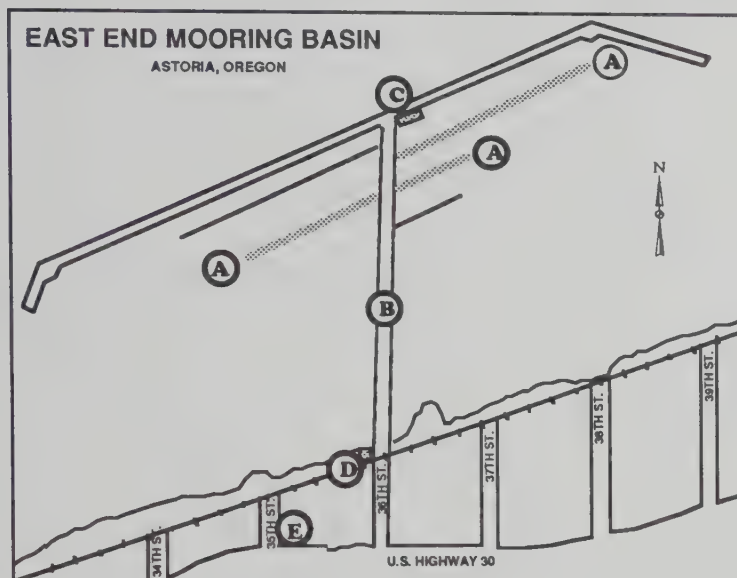
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- Resurface wooden causeway (B) with concrete. Causeway construction will shut down vehicle access for roughly 30 days later this summer, but foot access will remain unrestricted.
- Install 5,000-pound capacity hoist and work berth (C) to assist repairs and maintenance.
- Construct shoreside restroom and office structure (D).
- Grade and pave parking area (E).

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HERSCHEL'S BACK... AND HE'S HUNGRY!

Well, OK, maybe not the same Herschel the sea lion who took huge bites out of the Puget Sound steelhead run last year in Seattle, but surely a kissing cousin has sauntered into Willamette Falls locks near Oregon City this spring to dine on chinook salmon.

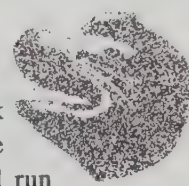
And, like his brother, he's hungry!

Sea lions, which don't usually wander this far up the river, have greatly increased in numbers since being protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act — especially the California sea lion on the Columbia. It is estimated that nearly 20,000 of them have taken up permanent residence here, much to the dismay of commercial fishermen.

"I've never seen one this close," said lockmaster Jack Reynolds. "He was a big devil."

Gillnetters have been essentially at the mercy of the mammals ever since, and can only harm them as a last resort to protect their catch. The sea lions roam the nets in search of food — and they've taken a big bite out of fishermen's pocketbooks.

"It's getting to be quite a pest as far as the fishermen are concerned," Reynolds added.



WHERE TO WRITE

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Westport, OR 97016

Senator Mark Hatfield
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Senator Robert Packwood
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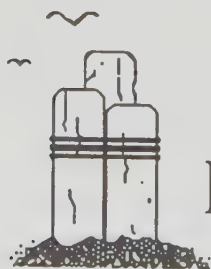
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On Washington's Elwha River

Dam removal is best way to restore fish runs

A federal study is recommending that two dams on Washington's Elwha River be demolished in order to restore dwindling fish runs.

The Elwha and Glines Canyon dams, both owned by the James River Corp. of Richmond, Va., were built more than sixty years ago near the northern border of the Olympic National Park. They generate electrical power for a pulp and paper mill near Port Angeles, which is now owned by Daishowa America of Japan.

Nearly 40 percent of the mill's power would be lost if the dams are removed,

but many see this as a small price to pay for the restoration of fish runs on the Elwha River, once renowned for four Pacific salmon and three trout species.


The federal General Accounting Office says it will cost between \$61 and \$124 million to remove the dams, depending upon how much sediment is present behind the dams.

Although the office says it would be two to six times cheaper to keep the dams and construct fish passageways at a price of about \$30 million, it is not recommending this solution. "This alternative is much less effective than dam re-

moval in restoring fish to the river above the dams," the report says.

"Since the construction of the Elwha dam, these native fish have been unable to migrate upstream to spawn and have been eliminated from the river above the dam," the GAO adds.

If removal is approved, it would be the first time that the federal government has proposed the decommissioning of a finished, working dam for environmental gain.

Not only is it against the grain, it would also be a giant step forward in our quest to save the salmon. 



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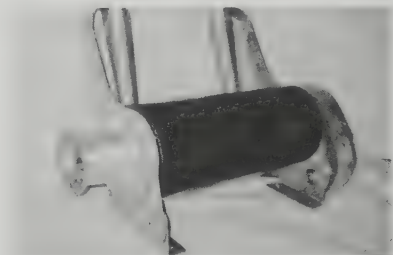
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A close-up look at Oregon's native salmon



Five species of salmon are native to Oregon's coastal waters: the chinook, the silver, the sockeye, the chum, and the pink.

Salmon have long been recognized as being of tremendous importance as a source of food, and many tons are taken annually by commercial fishermen of the state. The recreational value of two of them, the chinook and the silver, is yearly becoming more important.

A third species of Pacific salmon, the sockeye, is most important to the sport fishery when this fish has become landlocked or has been planted in mountain

lakes where it is known as the kokanee.

Management of the salmon poses tremendous problems. As a group, these are fish of unspoiled waters. They have exacting environmental requirements and are not adaptive to changing conditions. Man's advancement has had a damaging effect upon migratory fish. Physical changes have taken place in the watersheds as the timber has been removed from the land. Erosion smothers the spawning beds. Streams have been blocked by log jams, mill and splash dams, and even the gravel has been removed from the spawning beds to be used in road construction and other purposes. Other water uses have been developed for power and irrigation.

The Oregon State Game Commission has developed a vigorous, long-range management program in order to preserve these fish for the enjoyment of all citizens. In some instances, cooperative projects are undertaken with the Oregon Fish Commission, the agency charged with the management of Oregon's commercial fisheries.

The Game Commission's program includes stream clearance and habitat improvement projects where necessary. A campaign against pollution and erosion is also undertaken. Artificial propagation is an important tool in management, and several hatcheries are used to rear chinook

and silver salmon.

Releases are made in streams to supplement natural runs or in streams where the runs have been depleted. Sockeyes are also reared in commission hatcheries, and releases are made in lake systems where living conditions are suitable. Close regulation of the fishery is necessary to ensure the escapement of sufficient breeding stock each year.

Stream surveys indicate that our tremendous salmon runs of yesteryear can be brought back. Our streams, under proper management, can be made to yield several times their present production.

The life cycle of all Pacific salmon is similar. Spawning usually takes place high in the headwaters of fresh-water streams. Chum and pink salmon, however, make short migration runs, and at times will spawn even in brackish water.

The parent fish deposit their eggs in well-prepared circular depressions dug in the gravel of the stream bottom. As the eggs are deposited by the female, the male fertilizes them with milt.

The young salmon hatch in 2 to 4 months or more depending upon the temperature of the water, but remain in the gravel for about another 30 days living upon nutritive materials absorbed from the yolk sac, which remains attached to the stomach of the newly-hatched fish.

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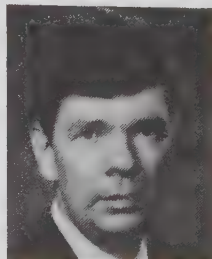
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fry wriggle from the gravel and begin to feed. Some of the young may migrate to the ocean immediately upon emergence from the gravel, while others may remain in fresh water a year or more before beginning their journey to salt water. They remain in the ocean until maturity, which takes from two to seven years.

At maturity, the spawning urge brings the salmon again into fresh water where they fight their way upriver until they reach their cradle stream.

Spawning completes their life-cycle, for, spent and exhausted from the hazardous journey during which they do not feed and, drained of vitality by the energy expended in the spawning act, all Pacific salmon die soon after the eggs are deposited in the gravel. Only the eggs now remain, and the perpetuation of the race depends upon the successful incubation of the eggs and the survival of the young.

The life cycle of the Atlantic salmon is similar to that of the Pacific salmon, with the exception that it does not die after spawning, but may spawn several times during its life.

Many fishermen are unable to tell the difference between the Pacific salmon and trout, especially when the fish are young. Two simple features separate them. One is the coloration inside the mouth. If it is black or has a dusky coloration, the fish is a salmon; if the inside of the mouth is white, it's a trout. Salmon and trout can also be identified by counting the anal fin rays. If the rays number from 13 to 19, it's a salmon; trout only have from 9 to 12 of these rays.

THE CHINOOK



Truly a king among salmon, this huge fish offers a challenge which tests the skill of the ablest fisherman. His great size and tremendous fighting qualities make him a fisherman's prize to be valued among the finest.

The chinook is a robust, deep-bodied fish with lengths of up to nearly 5 feet. The back is greenish, fading to silvery on the sides and belly. Profuse black spotting appears on the back, dorsal fin and

both lobes of the caudal fin. As with all Pacific salmon, spawning fish turn darkish, especially the males, which are muddy dark red, almost black in color.

Silver salmon, which inhabit the same waters, are often confused with the chinook. Chinooks, however, have black spotting on the dorsal and both lobes of the caudal fins, while silvers have black spotting only on the upper half of the caudal fin only. Also, the inside of the chinook's mouth is all black or dusky, while the silver has a white gum or tooth line.

The most consistent weights in the sport catch are from 10 to 45 pounds, although larger fish are frequently taken. The world's record sport-caught chinook was taken from the Umpqua River in 1910 and weighed 83 pounds. Commercial catches frequently record larger fish, with the record fish being taken at Petersburg, Alaska. This huge chinook tipped the scales at 126 pounds, 8 ounces.

Probably the most wide-ranging of the Pacific salmon group, the chinook is found from central California to Alaska and across the Bering Sea to Japan. In Oregon, he is found in almost every river where he has access to the sea, and where environmental conditions are suitable.

The largest runs appear in the Columbia River and its tributaries. Tremendous runs once used the upper reaches of the Columbia before these spawning areas were blocked by the Grand Coulee and other dams.

Maturity is attained in their fourth or fifth year, but some mature as early as their second year and as late as their eighth year. Second and third year fish are usually all males and are called "jack" salmon when they enter the streams on their spawning runs.

In general, two spawning migrations occur, spring and fall, although some fish may be in the rivers at all seasons. The spawning act takes place in the fall. Generally, spring run fish travel long distances and remain in deep pools until spawning time. The "redds" or nests are dug in the gravel by the female in fairly deep, fast-moving water. A single fe-

male may deposit eggs in several redds. From 3,000 to 11,000 eggs may be deposited, but the average is about 6,000. Many of the young go to sea during their first spring and summer, but some may remain in the streams at least a year.

Young chinooks first feed on plankton, then, as they grow, they take insects, insect larvae and small fish. In the ocean, sand lance, herring, and pilchard provide their main source of food.



THE SILVER

The savage striking power of the silver salmon, coupled with his swift, dazzling speed and tremendous jumping qualities, make this fish a favorite among fishermen. Smaller than the king, the silver salmon will average about 8 pounds. Many larger fish are taken, however. Coloration is a metallic blue along the back, fading to silvery on the sides and belly. Although bright and silvery when they first enter fresh water, they change to a muddy, reddish color during the spawning period.

Distinguishing characteristics are the irregular black spotting along the back and upper half of the caudal fin and a black mouth with a white gum line.

Although the silver is as wide-ranging as the chinook, the greatest abundance occurs from southern Oregon to southeastern Alaska. In Oregon, he is found in almost every coastal stream and may be found spawning a few miles from salt water as well as in the headwaters.

Spawning migrations occur in the fall, generally in the third year of life. Early maturing males, "jacks," are second year fish. Slow, shallow water and small, medium-sized streams are preferred for nest building. Several redds may be used by a single female, and from 3 to 4,000 eggs may be deposited. The seaward migration of the young may occur in the first, second or third year of life, with most migrating in their second year. Ocean growth is relatively slow until about a year before maturity. At this time, growth becomes extremely rapid, and their weight may be doubled during

Continued on page 33



A Wave Goodbye

David Sohappy Sr.
1925-1991

David Sohappy, an American Indian fishing rights activist who spent much of his life working for the preservation of treaty rights and traditional ways, passed away this spring after a series of strokes. He was 66.

Considered by many to be "the last great warrior of the Yakima tribe, David Sohappy was born April 25, 1925, on the Yakima Indian reservation just south of Harrah, Wash.

Sohappy was a key figure in Sohappy vs. Smith, an important 1968 federal court ruling that directed the states to regulate Indian treaty fishing only for conservation and protection of the resource.

That decision, in turn, led to the controversial Boldt decision in 1973, which gave half of the Columbia River salmon catch to the Yakima, Warm Springs, Umatilla and Nez Perce Indian tribes.

"I believe he did make a difference," said his son David Jr. "Just like Geronimo, Chief Joseph, Crazy Horse — they fought for what they believed in," he said.

He is survived by his wife, Myra, their seven children and two sisters.

William B. Wootton
1893-1991

Ninety-two-year Oregon resident William B. Wootton passed away in Milwaukie January 22. He was 97.

Mr. Wootton was born April 2, 1893, in Seattle, the son of Tom and Hannah Wootton. The family moved to Astoria just before the turn of the century, when his father became the foreman of the Marshall J. Kinney salmon cannery, part of the newly-formed Columbia River Packers Association.

Mr. Wootton attended Astoria High School, and the Oregon Agricultural College, now Oregon State University.

Mr. Wootton began working for his father at the CRPA cannery in Nushagak, Alaska in 1911, and continued working for the company until his retirement in 1958. He had much respect and admiration for the working men of the Northwest, especially fishermen and loggers.

He married Katherine Montgomery of Vernon, Texas in 1917 in Portland. She passed away in 1981.

Surviving are a sister, two sons, a daughter, six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Theodore Jackson
1904-1991

Lifetime Astoria resident and retired Columbia River Gillnetter Theodore Jackson, 86, passed away in Astoria April 25.

Mr. Jackson was born in Astoria August 31, 1904, the son of John and Sophia Jackson. He attended Astoria schools, as well as the University of Oregon.

Mr. Jackson worked at the Anderson Cannery in Astoria during World War II, then began working as a commercial fisherman on the Columbia. He also fished on Bristol Bay in Nakhik, Alaska, and had also been a tuna fisherman.

Mr. Jackson was a lifetime member of Peace Lutheran Church in Astoria, and was the congregation's oldest living member. He was also a member of the Clatsop County Historical Society.

He married Lillian Merrill in 1934 in Astoria. She survives. Also surviving are a sister, and several nieces and nephews.



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High-seas driftnets could spur imported seafood ban

Although the Bush Administration has consistently opposed any measures which would give the U.S. the power to penalize Asian high-seas driftnetters, three U.S. Representatives have introduced a bill which could place a ban on fish products coming from the offender countries.

Rep. Jolene Unsoeld, D-Wash., Rep. Don Young, R-Alaska and Rep. Gerry Studds, D-Mass. are spearheading the attack on driftnetters. "These drift-net pirate countries have to understand that if they insist on stealing our fish, we're going to get tough," says Unsoeld.

Driftnet fishermen from Japan, Tai-

wan and South Korea take millions of fish (including threatened salmon and steelhead) headed for American waters, then sell it back to us as a product of their own country. They fish with 40-foot-deep monofilament gillnets nearly 100 times longer than Columbia River gillnets, and 250 times longer than Bristol Bay gillnets.

The proposed measure would authorize the president to impose such sanctions on any country illegally using driftnets, even if the fish was not caught in them.

"We have to start slapping sanctions on fish products, and if that doesn't work,

I believe we then have to look toward TVs, VCRs and camcorders," Unsoeld added.

A similar proposal has been introduced in Oregon this spring by Sen. Bob Packwood. This bill goes a step beyond the Washington proposal, in that it would mandate sanctions on the countries that fail to stop the practice by the end of 1992, rather than making the penalties optional.

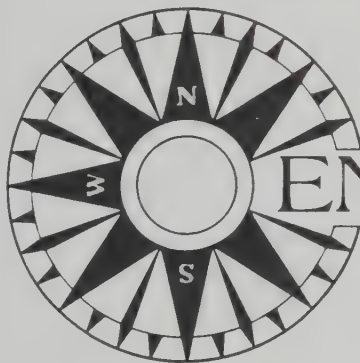
In 1989, Bush clung to his pro-foreign trade policies, soundly rejecting a proposed bill sponsored by Young which would have given him similar powers.

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Fishing nets not the cause of sea lion decline

FAIRBANKS, Alaska — Starvation and other effects of a severe food shortage — not predation, hunting, entanglement in fishing nets, or disease — has killed Steller sea lions and other marine mammals and seabirds in Alaska by the tens of thousands, according to a team of international scientists who met March 11-15 at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

The finding brings researchers one step closer to settling longstanding questions about alarming declines of Alaska marine mammals and seabirds, but leaves unresolved the role of the state's billion dollar commercial groundfish industry. Scientists from the United States, Canada, Norway, England, the Soviet Union and Scotland participated in the conference organized by the Washington and Alaska Sea Grant College Programs.

Researchers have for years been stymied by plummeting populations of Steller sea lions, northern fur seals, and harbor seals in Alaska.

But hardest hit have been Steller sea lions. Once seen in the thousands on rookeries in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska, Steller sea lion numbers have plunged by as much as 80 percent since 1985 through a region that stretches from the Kenai Peninsula to the western Aleutian Islands. Steller sea lions recently were listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Populations of Steller sea lions in Southeast Alaska, British Columbia, and Oregon remain stable.

To explain the crash in Alaska, researchers over the years have looked at hunting, incidental and intentional killings by fishermen, entanglement in debris, disease, and predation. But the numbers don't add up to the more than 100,000 sea lions missing in recent counts. So this time researchers focused on the only cause left, food. Using charts, graphs, and piles of research data, scientists now believe the evidence points to a dramatic food shortage.

"We looked at what was happening out there and tried to decide if what we were seeing would normally occur when food is in short supply," said Dr. Michael Castellini, a marine mammal biologist at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. "There seems little doubt that it is somehow food related."

Researchers believe unexplained shortages of herring, capelin, sand lance, eula-

chon, and other small forage fish favored as prey may have triggered the deaths of juvenile Steller sea lions and caused birth rates to drop. And since these same prey species are eaten by seabirds, a food shortage scenario also could help explain their reduced numbers.

"If marine mammals find themselves with short supplies of food, their physical condition deteriorates, and that is what we are seeing," said Dr. David Lavigne, a zoologist from the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada. Newborn Steller sea lions and other marine mammals off Alaska suffer from lower than normal birth weights, reduced growth rates, and malnutrition, researchers said. Adults also show signs of malnutrition, perhaps because they must travel farther and dive deeper to find less and less food.

Steller sea lions are opportunistic

Continued on page 37



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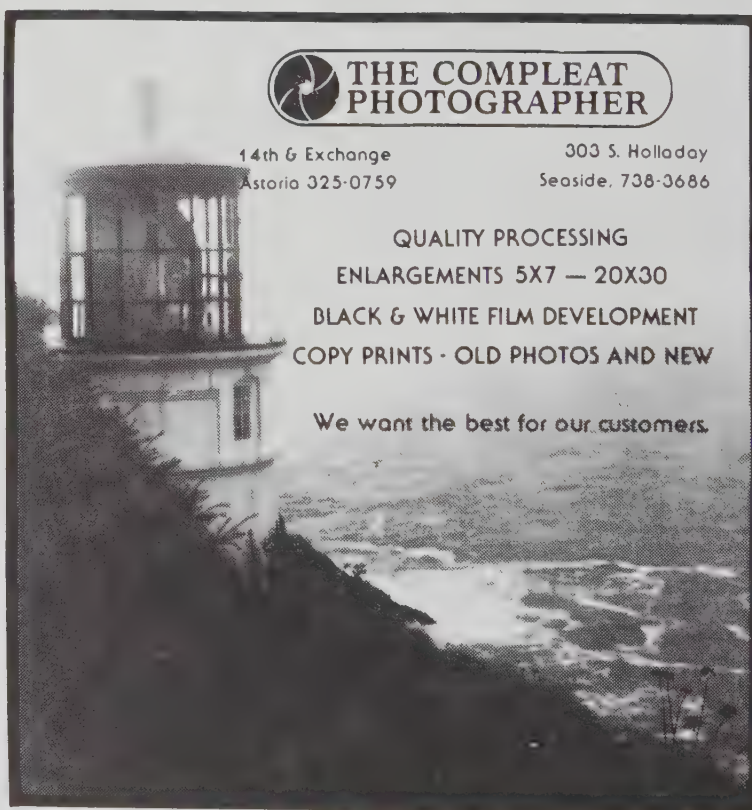
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Bringing back the rivers

OSU projects are giving life to three damaged Oregon streams

Oregon State University has decided to do something about the degraded condition of many of Oregon's scenic streams and waterways.

Three OSU projects, aimed at stimulating the growth of aquatic plants and animals as well as stabilizing crumbling riverbanks, are beginning to show great promise in restoring the damaged streams.

In the Willamette Valley's Oak Creek, near Corvallis, some 1,400 cottonwood cuttings (similar to trees being planted by James River in Clatsop and Columbia counties) were planted along the banks of the creek in 1989, to determine if the trees could absorb some of the excess soil and nitrogen which flows into the water from livestock in the surrounding area.

Last year, alder seedlings were placed nearby as well, in a project started by Bill Emmingham and Dave Hibbs of OSU's Forest Science Department, Stan Gregory of OSU's Fish and Wildlife Department, and Jim Sedell of the U.S. Forest Service Research Station.

Both alder and cottonwood grow very quickly — up to ten feet per year — and will eventually provide valuable shade which will keep the stream cool, important for a productive fish habitat. The wood debris from the trees also reduces the flow of the stream, creating ripples of water and pools for fish, says Hibbs.

As well as stabilizing the riverbank, the planted trees will provide shelter and a protective habitat for all types of fish and wildlife, and may also prevent nearby cattle from entering the stream and doing damage.

Although the Oak Creek project is just entering its third year of existence, it already shows great promise, and state officials have expressed interest in creating similar projects at Tillamook and Coos Bay.

"There hasn't been much interest in restoring agricultural rivers and streams in the past. We hope the results of this experiment will spur other riparian rehabilitation projects throughout Oregon," added Hibbs.

At Quartz Creek, a McKenzie River tributary in the Cascades, large logs have been strategically placed in the creekbed, replacing logs which were removed when the area was clear-cut in the early 1970s. It was initially thought that removing the in-stream logs was best for the habitat, but actually the opposite was true.

"Looking at pristine conditions, we now realize that a river with plenty of downed woody debris is more stable biologically," OSU's Gregory says.

In-stream logs significantly slow the river's torrential current, and allow the formation of fish spawning pools. They also provide protective refuge for a wide variety of aquatic plants and animals which would otherwise be swept away by the rushing water.

"It's important to leave a lot of standing trees in riparian forests to provide shade and downed woody material to the stream into the future," Gregory adds.

Eastern Oregon's arid climate is ideal for cattle grazing, but cattle can trample and seriously erode stream banks, as well as defoliate vegetation and defecate in the water as they drink it.

At Crook County's Bear Creek, near the Prineville Reservoir, a large freshwater trough was constructed last winter at nearby McCormack ranch to lure the cows away from the stream, and it appears to be working.

"The cattle spent 90 percent less time in the creek after the water troughs were built," says OSU's John Buckhouse.



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Illegal fish poaching is big business

TACOMA — A successful 14-month sting operation came to a close here this spring with the arrest of at least two dozen persons who face charges of allegedly trafficking in illegally-caught salmon, sturgeon and steelhead — most of it taken from already badly depressed Columbia River stocks.

Working with just a pickup truck and a mobile phone, agents from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife set up a fake company in January 1990 which bought and sold nearly six tons of illegally-caught fish from the alleged poachers.

More than a dozen Indian fishermen,

mostly from the Umatilla, Yakima, Nisqually and Warm Springs tribes, are facing poaching charges in their respective tribal courts. State and federal prosecutors are focusing on the non-Indian dealers, who both bought and sold the fish.

The black market for fish in Washington and here in Oregon is big business — and big money. Indians have a special right to catch fish for tribal ceremonies, so they can easily tap deeper into the resource for personal profit.

The fish are sold mostly to markets and restaurants in Seattle and Portland, for as little as \$10 for a whole chinook. A

restaurant can then serve the fish to its customers for as much as ten times more than it paid for it.

"Poaching has been and will continue to be a large problem," says Lt. Daren Parker, game district chief for the Oregon State Police. "It moves us closer to extinction unless we stop the market.

If you stop the market, the hunters will quit killing," he says.

Columbia River sturgeon accounted for more than 1,200 pounds of the illegal fish. Sturgeon caviar, also sold and highly valued by the poachers, is worth four times its weight in silver in Northwest markets.



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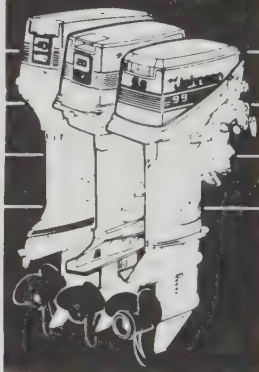
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Did you Know?

The historic, colorful story of the dauntless Columbia River Gillnetter has been captured and preserved in a 30-minute video documentary called "Work is our Joy."

A combined effort of the Oregon State University Sea Grant program, author Irene Martin and the Columbia River Maritime Museum, the slide/tape presentation thoughtfully portrays the Columbia River gillnet fisherman from his humble beginnings in the 1800's to the present.

It is available at the CRFPU office, or at the OSU Seafood Laboratory at 250 36th street, Astoria, for \$25. The video can be mailed to you for a \$3 charge.

If you haven't had the opportunity to see this creative, entertaining work, now is the time, as quantities are limited. It is truly a sensitive, one-of-a-kind recollection of the history of the gillnetter.

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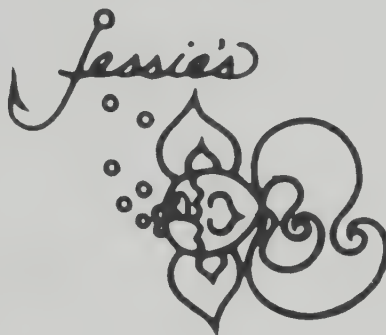
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Summit

Some irrigation pumps and municipal water facilities will still feel the draw-down, however.

Steps will also be taken to restore falling populations of fall chinook salmon, including improving late summer water flows from the Snake's Brownlee Reservoir. State biologists say that 1,000 pairs are needed for the species to survive, and only about 400 reached their spawning grounds last year.

Meanwhile, the Corps will press forward with installation of fish bypass screens at the Lower Monumental and Ice Harbor dams on the Snake, and at The Dalles Dam on the Columbia.

The Bonneville Power Administration will also expand its predator-control program, which pays a bounty for squawfish, a species of fish responsible for a large percentage of salmon losses in the reservoirs behind dams. Predator-control facilities are now in place at eight reservoirs.

Despite the criticism, Sen. Hatfield praised the work of the Summit panel. "The work these people have done has led to a greater understanding of the problem associated with these declining salmon runs," he says, "and has laid a strong foundation for future actions to restore them."

It may be just the start of the race to save the salmon, but hopefully, the salmon will win.



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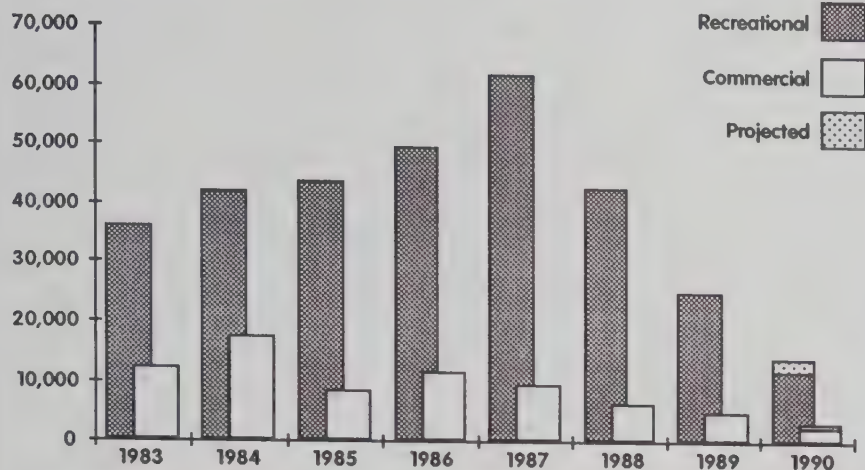
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Source: Washington Department of Fisheries, 9/90

THE BIGGER PIECE OF THE PIE

Sports fishermen have long been working to stop gillnetters from taking and selling sturgeon on the Columbia River, even though they have always caught thousands more than we do, year after year.

Sportsmen are trying hard to get a sturgeon bill on the '92 ballot, saying that there's "no justification for a commercial harvest" and that the sturgeon's decreasing numbers "cannot withstand severe fishing pressure."

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Hatcheries: Are they part of the fish solution? *by Jim Gladson*

More than a century ago, biologists estimate that the Columbia River system alone supported annual runs of 15 million salmon and steelhead. All these fish were wild. Today, that total run averages about 2.5 million fish. The majority of these fish are of hatchery origin.

To the early settlers of the Oregon Territory, this place was truly the land of milk and honey. The bounty of natural resources seemed endless. The story here is no different than other 19th Century American histories describing the occupation of wild lands by newcomers of European heritage.

For new arrivals to the territory, the first job was to survive. The wilderness was not a friendly place for those people not native to the environment, but survive they did. A wilderness tamed soon became a wilderness to be used. Thick carpets of tall trees and clear rivers jammed with fish were no longer considered just wood for shelter and food for individual tables. By the last third of the 19th Century, these resources became the fodder of commerce.

For those who think the "Good Old Days" of fish abundance were in the decades just prior to World War II, think again. The largest annual harvest of salmon and steelhead from the Columbia River was in 1884. That is not a typographical error — 1884. It has been downhill since then.

Rather than focus on the causes of subsequent declines and seek to correct them, leaders of that time adopted what seemed a logical, and relatively painless, solution. If enough fish are not produced naturally, then we will fill the void ourselves. For example, the first Oregon hatchery was built in 1877 and operated by the U.S. Government on the Clackamas River. Its goal — produce more fish for harvest. The ultimate impact of such no-holds-barred hatchery production on the Columbia and other rivers such as the Rogue was not considered, or even understood as an issue, at the time.

Oregon State University graduated its first class of Fish and Wildlife Management Scientists in 1938. Before these fledgling biologists entered the working world, producing fish in hatcheries and fishery management were synonymous. Running hatcheries to churn out more fish was what fishery managers did.

By the time these scientists were on the job and effective, Grand Coulee Dam on the upper Columbia in Washington State was already in place — forever blocking salmon and steelhead passage to upstream spawning waters and reducing production from 11 to 65 percent depend-

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ing on the species. Bonneville Dam builders had closed its gates after dedication by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1938.

Fortunately, people who better understood salmon and steelhead migration were able to affect changes in the original Bonneville design which did not include any upstream fish passage facilities.

Once these trained factory managers were in place, following a detour for war-time service, the focus gradually began to shift from the exclusive needs of harvesters to the requirements of the fish as well.

When hatcheries began operation in the late 1800s, operators trapped wild fish to serve as brood stock. In some extreme cases, wild runs were trapped completely to meet hatchery needs, seriously damaging natural-spawning production.

Early hatchery operators also released their products without thinking long-term impacts on native stocks already present. The basic concept was that salmon, steelhead and trout were generic. Therefore, there seemed to be no conflict about releasing Columbia River stock fish in mid-coast streams, for example.

Decision-makers supported construction of irrigation and hydroelectric dams that blocked fish passage under the assumption that lost natural production could be replaced or mitigated with hatchery programs.

While today's hatcheries may resemble those of earlier decades, these facilities are also getting a bum rap based on practices of the past that have since been proven ineffective or even harmful, according to Department of Fish and Wildlife Fish Propagation Supervisor, Chris Christianson.

"Early hatcheries were run with little or no scientific understanding other than the basics of hatchery fish production. As scientific knowledge expanded so has the sophistication of hatchery methods and technology," says Christianson. "Some of the concerns about today's hatchery operations are based on practices that were dropped years ago," he said.

The modern public hatchery operates for three basic reasons, says Christian-

son. In many cases, all three roles are played at the same facility. These basic roles are:

Enhancement — This was the single role of hatcheries a century ago and remains important today. The goal is production of surplus fish to supplement harvest by sport and commercial users. Current efforts range from coho programs to support ocean fisheries to legal-size trout stocking in mountain lakes.

As long as the public demand to harvest fish exceeds the ability of natural habitats to meet production demands, hatcheries will be necessary. There is no getting around the numbers. Eighty percent of all trout and 70 percent of all steelhead landed in Oregon come from state-owned hatcheries. Sixty-nine percent of all coho salmon harvested come from public hatcheries. Loss of these fish would amount to elimination of some fisheries. Addition of these hatchery fish also serves as a buffer to protect against over-harvest of wild stocks using the

same waters.

Mitigation — This is also a long-standing function. Most of the Columbia River system hatcheries, for example, are mitigation facilities funded to replace natural production lost when dams cut off or flooded spawning and rearing areas. In most cases, these same facilities also enhance fisheries.

Conservation — This is the growth business for public hatcheries today. These facilities can be used as a key component for rehabilitation of declining natural stocks, be they trout, salmon or steelhead.

In decades past, most public decision-makers and fishery managers accepted the theory that loss of natural production habitats could somehow be covered by increased hatchery output. Essentially, hatchery fish were considered reasonable replacements for wild stocks. This certainly reduced the apparent need to protect habitats that were also desirable for other

Continued on next page

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Hatcheries

human uses. Not surprisingly, it was often much easier to get funding for a new or expanded hatchery than for a more vigorous habitat protection and improvement program.

The fact is, replacing wild stocks has not worked in practice. It is difficult for hatchery fish to replace wild stocks. Fishery managers are very aware today that maintaining healthy supplies of native, locally adapted, stocks is key to the long-term survival of hatchery programs.

Developing the appropriate hatchery brood stock begins with wild fish adapted to native streams and lakes. In addition, periodic injection of wild vigor into hatchery stocks is important to prevent in-breeding and avoid domestication of hatchery populations.

A protected hatchery environment is also an effective way to boost lagging naturally-spawning stocks by helping more fish survive the challenges of the first several months of life in the wild.

In 1860, hatcheries were unnecessary because the natural bounty exceeded the demand of human users. As this balance changed, hatcheries expanded to meet human needs.

By 1960, hatchery production was poised for massive expansion to meet growing public demand for greater sport and commercial harvest. Efforts were also underway to protect natural habitats and increase production, but more fish now still meant more hatchery fish. Today, this same public still demands more fish, but a growing number of Oregonians, including fishery managers themselves, openly resist further assaults on native fish. Some beleaguered Columbia River salmon stocks are already being considered for listing as threatened or endangered species. Other fish listings may follow.

Based on current information surrounding wild fish issues, a person might conclude this debate about fish enhancement and protection has become and either/or contest of hatchery fish versus wild fish.

Not true at all, says Doug DeHart, assistant chief of the department's fish divi-

sion. "Wild fish management is not anti-hatchery; just anti certain hatchery practices. What we are striving for is a complementary program of hatchery and wild-life fish production," he said.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife Fish Management Policy sets down strict guidelines on how wild and hatchery stocks can interact. The basic conclusions of the policy — they should not interact, and certainly not interbreed, where a viable wild population exists. In other areas or water bodies that lack potential conflicts, the fish population may be entirely of hatchery origin.

Or perhaps there are options for compromise. In some cases, such as the Coos Basin, creative handling of hatchery salmon releases can provide the enhancement bonus of more fish in ocean and lower river fisheries while avoiding competition with wild salmon stocks spawning and rearing in other tributaries.

Gone are the days of totally trapping out wild stocks to supply hatcheries with brood stock. Fish of the same species, but different origins are no longer mixed without thought of potential impacts.

In short, the ways of decades past have been dropped, changed or enhanced where appropriate, reflecting a renewed commitment to protect the important genetic and cultural heritage of Oregon's native fish stocks.

DeHart, one of the authors of the department's wild fish policy, and Christianson both agree that the need for hatcheries is certainly not going to decline. It could likely increase. Advocates of eliminating hatcheries are not being realistic, according to DeHart.

There is no going back to the pristine days, at least in the lifetime of most people living today, says DeHart. "Current and future loss of fish habitat and increasing human-based needs for water have created a potentially irreversible decline in natural production capacity," he said. "There have been major efforts to protect habitat over the last 30 years, and still it declines. Given increased human populations, given our standard of living, we will continue to lose habitat and production over time."

The best hatchery practices today imitate nature, and can stop or at least delay fish losses, says Christianson "We could eliminate hatcheries, let the decline happen and ride the slide on down, or we can intervene intelligently and try to maintain our fish populations. This is the reason for artificial production programs," he said.

Jim Gladson is the editor of Oregon Wildlife, a publication of the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission



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THE SOCKEYE



Here is a salmon with perhaps the most exacting environmental requirements of any, for the sockeye or "blue-back" spawns only in streams having lakes at the headwaters. Entering the streams in June or July, during their third or fourth year of life, these fish make their way upstream and enter the lakes. Spawning usually takes place in tributary systems, although some may spawn in the lake as well. The number of eggs will average 3,500. The newly-born salmon move immediately into the lake where they spend their development stage which usually takes a full year. At that time, they migrate to the ocean.

Both the young and adult sockeye feed exclusively on plankton. During their lake existence, the young are dependent upon it for their development. An abundance of plankton is provided by the salt-water environment.

The sockeye is important mainly to the commercial fishery. The sockeye is a medium-sized salmon weighing up to 12 pounds. The back is greenish-blue with silvery sides and belly. The blueback has no black spotting.

The blueback can be found from the Columbia to Bristol Bay, Alaska.

—Courtesy of the Oregon
State Game Commission

NEXT ISSUE: The chum and the pink

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AuCoin to run for Senate in '92

Nine-term Democratic Congressman Les AuCoin has announced that he will run against Oregon's junior Senator in the 1992 election.

AuCoin, longtime advocate for Oregon's commercial fishing industry while representing District 1, is confident he'll easily defeat Republican incumbent Bob Packwood.

"I've been good to this part of the state, and in the Senate I'm going to be even better to Clatsop County and the state," AuCoin says. "I produce results."

As well as providing a strong voice for our local industries, AuCoin has spearheaded many other positive contributions to this part of the state, including the improvements to the East End Mooring Basin, the expansion of the Fort Clatsop National Memorial visitor's center and the planned U.S. Navy home port for two minesweepers at Tongue Point.

"Astoria knows that. That's why I think I'm going to have an overwhelming landslide in Clatsop County," AuCoin added.

AuCoin says his decision to run for the Senate position was not influenced by the state legislature's unpopular plan to redraw congressional district lines, which would remove the North Coast from AuCoin's representation.

"Absolutely not. I made the decision before any redistricting plan appeared in the Legislature," he said.

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Yaquina Bay herring quotas easily reached

NEWPORT — Yaquina Bay herring fishermen easily reached their 210-ton quota allotment this year, catching some 21,000 tons in just a matter of hours.

In 1989, the ten permit holders of the fishery decided to combine their efforts and split the quota ten ways, one share for each permit.

This year, each boat earned about \$17,000.

"There's always the chance you're going to break something and if you break down on a four-hour season you aren't going to get anything. So it's

kind of guaranteed; you don't have to worry about it anymore. You always know you're going to make something," says Tracy Cole, a Newport fisherman.

But, Cole adds, "It does take a lot of the fun out of it. It's not the big derby anymore."

Fishermen received about \$800 per ton for the fish at the start of the season, down from some \$1200 last year.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife sets the annual quota for the fishery at about 20 percent of the previous year's total biomass.



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SEA LIONS

feeders, that is they'll eat whatever is readily available and easy to catch. To compensate for shortages of other small forage fish, scientists speculate that sea lions — especially the young — have turned to juvenile pollock. Young pollock are found close to the surface, where they are easy prey for young sea lions unable to dive deeply.

But stocks of young pollock can vary greatly from year to year, and are an unreliable source of food for hungry sea lions. And while researchers agree inadequate food is the problem, they do not agree on what causes it.

Some researchers, including Lloyd Lowry, the marine mammals coordinator for the Alaska Department of Fish and

Game, think the commercial fishing industry shares the blame.

"There's no question that in certain areas the fishing industry is playing a role. You look at all those boats taking fish. The fish aren't there for the marine mammals."

Each year, trawlers and factory ships in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska catch more than two million tons of pollock, and turn them into fillets, fish sticks, and surimi, an ingredient in imitation crab. More than 5,000 people are employed in the groundfish catching and processing industry that includes nearly 100 factory trawlers, according to a seafood industry study published by the Alaska Sea Grant College Program.

Others say fishing is less of a factor,

because pollock stocks overall are high and the industry doesn't target young pollock.

Researchers can't be sure how forage fish such as capelin and herring have become scarce, or why pollock have become the dominant fish off Alaska. But they suggest environmental influences may have altered the food chain.

"Something has clearly changed in the environment," said Castellini. "The consequence of these changes has been more pollock, but fewer pollock of the age-class preferred by sea lions."

Castellini and colleagues theorize that natural factors such as predation on young pollock by larger fish and an expanding population of adult pollock that may be cannibalizing young pollock also are responsible. Adult pollock may also be eating the herring, capelin, and other prey favored by marine mammals and seabirds, but, again, researchers don't have enough data to say for sure.

In fact, researchers know very little about the food and feeding habits of marine mammals, and most of what they do know is gathered when marine mammals come ashore once each year to give birth. Much of what marine mammals do the rest of the year remains a mystery. The void has left researchers with little advice on how to reverse the declines.

"It's obvious we need to protect and build the biomass of young pollock and other prey species," said Castellini.

Despite the uncertainty over the cause of food shortages, the fishing industry likely will play a role in restoring marine mammal populations, since fishing is one of the few parts of the puzzle managers can control.

In fact, pollock allocations could come down in some areas once researchers know where marine mammals feed. Studies by the NMFS to determine Steller sea lion feeding areas began in 1990 and will continue this summer.

"It might be that once we know where sea lions feed, we will need to regulate fishing in certain areas to make sure mammals and seabirds get an adequate supply of food," Lowry said.

For more information, contact the Alaska Sea Grant College Program, University of Alaska Fairbanks, 138 Irving II, Fairbanks, AK 99775-5040. 907/474-7086

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fishermen

Harbor Gillnetters Association, Salmon for Washington, the Puget Sound Gillnetters Association, the Northwest Gillnetters Association and the Willapa Bay Gillnetters Association.

"We really need to stick together as a group as much as we can," said one member of Salmon for All. "We've been sitting around too long, when we need to get organized," he added.

In Newport, a similar fishermen's group has been formed, with a slightly different focus. "We want to ensure that a commercial fishery will exist in Oregon," says Tom Shafer, director of the Oregon Fisheries Congress, which has about sixty members so far.

"We don't want to be portrayed as rapists of the resource and we don't want to be rapists," Shafer adds. Too often, people are perceiving commercial fishermen as resource abusers, he says, and that's just not the case.

"There is a growing awareness within the fleets of the concerns voiced by environmentalists about ocean resource usages," Shafer says.

The group, also formed this spring, has members from Oregon's salmon, shrimp, crab, longline and trawl fleets, and will represent all segments of the \$300 million-a-year commercial fishing industry on both political and environmental issues.

For more information, the Oregon Fisheries Congress can be reached in Newport at (503) 265-9882.

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A final word on our friend the sea lion...

To the Editor: Approximately 445 creatures were fishing between Willamette Falls and the Interstate 205 bridge on a recent Tuesday morning, a distance of less than a mile. About 420 of them were fishermen aboard the 140 pleasure craft in the water. Another 24 fishermen stood on the banks.

One sea lion was fishing as well, and according to many of his human counterparts, he was seriously depleting the amount of fish in the area.

While the sea lion was indeed enjoying greater success than any of the people there, it only took a pair of half-decent eyes to determine the far greater threat to the fish.

—Jefferson Ranck, NE Portland

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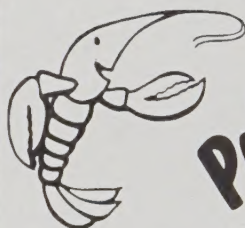
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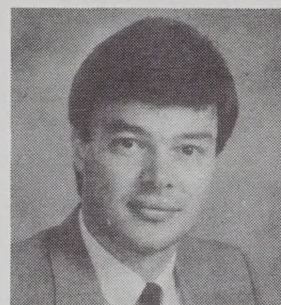
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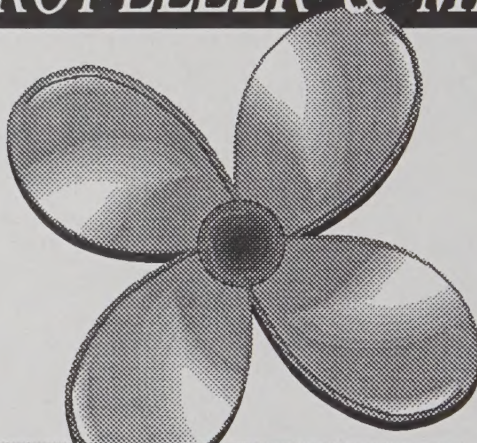
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